



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Small Businesses Win Big at ATIA Convention & Trade Show in Sitka, AK

\$20,000 Cash Prizes Awarded at 5th Annual ATIA Alaska Tourism Shark Tank

Sitka, AK – Based on the reality TV show Shark Tank, the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) held its 5th Annual Alaska Tourism Shark Tank competition on October 13, during the association’s annual industry convention and trade show. Entrepreneurs from across the state presented innovative ideas in front of three Alaska tourism “Shark” sponsors and a live ATIA convention audience, hoping to win a cash prize to help turn their business ideas into reality.

ATIA convention-goers also got the chance to enter the water and cast their vote for a fan favorite.

Participants were allowed 3 slides and 2 minutes to make their pitch. Ideas ranged from new products to market outreach. Alaska’s tourism sharks provided “fin-tastic” business advice, diving deep to “chews” their favorite.

Shark-selected winners were:

- Tundra Travels, Girdwood - \$10,000 for partial funding to purchase a second vehicle to increase capacity for summer 2023. <https://tundratravels.com/>
- Chena Outdoor Collective, Fairbanks - \$8,000 for materials for a destination shelter for their reindeer sleigh ride. <https://www.chenaoutdoorco.com/>
- Fishability Alaska, LLC received the “Fan Favorite” \$2,000 cash prize to develop accessible sportfishing opportunities in Ketchikan.

Other participating businesses included:

- Alaska Via Ferrata, Juneau - support to open a new via ferrata route at Eaglecrest Ski Area
- Planeket, Anchorage - to expand branding opportunities for a travel blanket and packaging <https://planeket.com/>
- Savor Sitka - to support start-up costs for a walking and local food tour

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- Squid Acres Kennels, Cantwell - to build a timber pavilion with fireplace
<https://squidacres.com/>

“I am excited to celebrate the winners of the 2022 ATIA Alaska Tourism Shark Tank. We had great ideas presented, and all represented innovation from our industry’s entrepreneurs,” said Sarah Leonard, ATIA President and CEO. “We’re looking forward to watching the winners put their prize money towards growing their businesses!”

Dale Wade, Alaska Railroad Corporation; Scott Habberstad, Alaska Airlines; and Leslie Dahl, Wells Fargo Bank served as this year’s Shark panel. Sponsors included the Alaska Railroad Corporation, GCI, Wells Fargo Bank, and Alaska Airlines.

Tundra Travels, Chena Outdoor Collective, and Fishability Alaska join previous Shark Tank top winners, Hike Alaska, Salted Roots, Naataq Gear, Laing & Co., Koyukuk River Tribal Tours, Gilpatrick’s Hotel Chitina, Juneau Food Tours, and Paws for Adventure.

ATIA is Alaska’s largest statewide membership trade association for the travel industry and represents more than 600 members and businesses supporting Alaska tourism. ATIA promotes Alaska’s travel industry as one of the state’s major economic forces and advocates for the growth of the industry while remaining attentive to Alaska’s natural environment, diverse cultures, and unique quality of life.

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